WHAT THE SONG IN YOUR HEAD MEANS **WELLBEING** {page 19}

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Deacon accused in sex assaults

- Church leader charged with rape, other acts against five girls between 1997-2005
- Police: Could be more victims, suspect worked with kids at juvenile facility {page 02}

Sixers. Mascot

The Sixers franchise has made some puzzling decisions recently, but a moose? After getting rid of Hip-Hop and commissioning the world-famous Jim Henson Creature Shop, the Sixers' new owners unveiled Big Ben, Phil E. Moose and B. Franklin Dogg as the three finalists for the team's new mascot. Fans can pick their favorite by voting at SixersMascotFanVote.com by 7 p.m. Friday.

News

What's Romney hiding?

- Presidential candidate spent $100K in state money to clear digital evidence trail
- Docs from his tenure erased {page 08}

Smell like a 'Jersey' girl

JWoww, what is that bewitching scent? It 'Shore' smells, um, strong {page 10}

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In the news

Closed for more testing

Father Judge High School will remain closed today as an independent firm conducts additional tests into possible hazards after dozens of people reported eye irritation following a Sunday event. City health officials declared the building safe after two days of testing. METRO

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ONLINE TODAY

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WE DISSECT TLC'S 'THE VIRGIN DIARIES'

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MICHAEL BUBLÉ'S CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

WWW.METRO.US/MEOW
SHARK SANTA VISITS THE AQUARIUM

Robbery suspect surrenders

HUNTING PARK. One of the suspects sought in a rash of armed robberies near Temple University's campus turned himself in Monday night.

Kevin Wilson, 26, surrendered at the 39th District headquarters. Police are still seeking his alleged accomplice, Timothy Ballard, 31.

Wilson is charged with five counts of robbery, simple assault, terroristic threats, and related offenses. METRO

Winning ticket from Center City

CENTER CITY. A lottery ticket worth $1.2 million was sold Monday at Eighth and Chestnut streets' Cornerstone Newsstand.

The Match 6 Lotto ticket, the ninth since March 6 to hit the jackpot, had the six winning numbers of 23-25-27-39-42-44. The prize has not yet been claimed, though the winner has a year to do so. The newsstand will also receive a $10,000 bonus for selling the ticket. METRO

▶ Matthews

Matthews charged with perjury

MONTGOMERY COUNTY. The head of the County Board of Commissioners has been charged with perjury and false swearing for allegedly lying to a grand jury.

James Matthews, brother of MSNBC host Chris Matthews, is accused of making misrepresentations on a financial statement filed with the state and then lying to investigators when questioned under oath. Matthews is free on $50,000 bail. METRO

Festive. Lights

▶ A vendor in Love Park waved lights last night.

REKARD LARMA/METRO

Tree lighting ceremony today

Mayor Michael Nutter and first lady Lisa Nutter will light the city's 38-foot tree in Love Park at approximately 5:53 p.m. The annual tradition was moved from City Hall this year because of construction work at Dilworth Plaza. METRO

Cops: Victims found at church

Cedarbrook deacon charged with incidents dating back to '90s Police say he threatened to kill for silence

A man affiliated with a church in the Cedarbrook section of Northwest Philadelphia was arrested Monday night after five women came forward alleging he sexually assaulted them between 1997 and 2005, police said.

Courtney Wilson, 56, was recently named deacon at the Remnant Church of God 7th Day on the 7700 block of Ogontz Avenue, said Capt. John Darby of the Special Victims Unit. He was charged with a variety of offenses.

"We're talking about 14 enumerated crimes, with multiple counts of each, including rape, involuntary deviant sexual intercourse, various levels of sexual assault, endangering the welfare of children, corrupting the morals of minors — do you want me to continue?" Darby said.

The charges also include one count of making terroristic threats. "In at least one case, he threatened to kill the victim if she told anyone," Darby said. Wilson is currently in police custody.

The assaults allegedly occurred multiple times through eight years at Wilson's home, the victims' homes, a car he used to take at least one of the victims to school and, in at least one case, a hotel.

His accusers range from 22 to 27 years old. One is a distant relative of Wilson's and another is a friend of hers, Darby said.

ALEX WIGGLESWORTH
awigglesworth@metro.us

More victims?

Darby said that investigators are concerned about the possibility of more victims. Wilson was employed at the Flourtown juvenile correctional facility Carson Valley Children's Home at the time of his arrest. "As a result, that places him working with children," Darby said.

Anyone who has witnessed a crime involving Wilson or been a victim is urged to contact the Special Victims Unit at 215-686-3251 or 3252. METRO/AW

Quoted

"The incidents go back at least 10 years. ... This didn't involve the church directly; however, that's where the initial contacts were made."
DARBY

Rapist attacks in Kensington

Authorities are concerned about an "evolving pattern" of recent sexual assaults in Kensington.

Three victims have reported being assaulted at knifepoint, one on Nov. 14 and two on Nov. 22. The third victim just came forward, said Capt. John Darby of the Special Victims Unit.

In all three incidents, women got into a white 1999 Volkswagen Jetta, possibly dirty with rear tinted windows and a muffler problem, in the early morning hours and were assaulted at knifepoint. One of the victims said she was forced into the car, while the other two said they went willingly.

The suspect is described as a heavyset, clean-shaven Hispanic man with short, dark hair and tattoos on both forearms. METRO/AW

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METRO

Eight shuttered schools a safety hazard: Report

City Controller says the schools have become havens for crime, short dumping ◐ He urges action before a plan to close nine more schools is OK'd

Eight vacant school buildings owned by the Philadelphia School District are posing safety hazards to residents and should to be demolished, according to a new report released by City Controller Alan Butkovitz.

The problems range from missing windows and exposed rebar at the former Roberto Clemente School in Feltonville to reported drug use and other criminal activity at the shuttered Rudolph Walton School in Strawberry Mansion, the report claims. It suggests that Clemente, closed in 1998, is structurally unsafe and needs to be razed immediately.

RIKARD LARMA/METRO

Quoted

"We are challenged by the buildings being broken into constantly and on an ongoing basis."
DISTRICT SPOKESMAN FERNANDO GALLARD

"Our current review found that the School District continues to allow the majority of its vacant buildings to become neighborhood eyesores and safety hazards," said Butkovitz, who estimates it would cost $5 million to demolish the structures.

In August, there was a four-alarm fire at the former Edison High School a month after it had been sold to a private developer. Butkovitz called for action on that facility in 2008. The report also comes as the district considers closing another nine schools to reduce the number of empty seats.

School officials said they have taken steps to secure the buildings, but they are often re-vandalized.

"We are challenged by the buildings being broken into constantly and on an ongoing basis," district spokesman Fernando Gallard said. Gallard said the eight buildings mentioned in the report are up for sale. While the district would not rule out demolition, he said: "It's our last option, because we're challenged by a budget gap we have to close."

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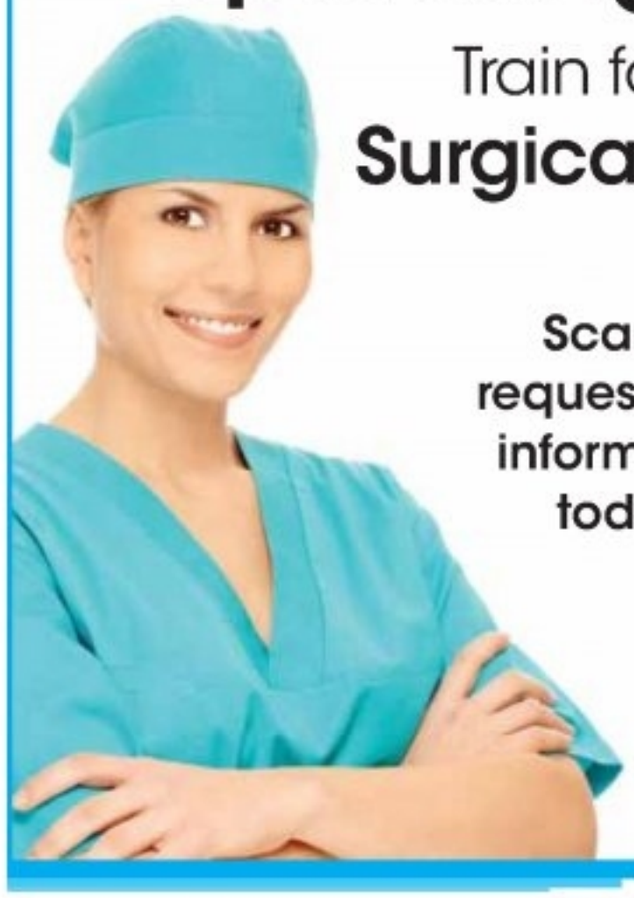

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Rob L., Downingtown, PA
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Opinion

ROB WONDERLING
PRESIDENT AND CEO, GREATER PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NEW FACES, NEW CHANCES

In 1796, President Washington drafted a farewell address to Congress to announce his intention to decline a third term. Due to his advanced age, years of service, and the duties of the presidency, Washington was said to have been exhausted. George Washington's story of retiring from public service and returning to his farm is legendary and helped shaped the presidential office for years to come. In fact, the idea of elected officials serving for limited amounts of time and then returning to their communities has a long tradition in America.

In Philadelphia, six of the 17 City Council members are retiring after long and distinguished service to the city and the constituents they served. In January, a new group of representatives will be joining City Council.

We at the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce look forward to working with this new group and the returning Council members on an agenda of economic growth and job creation. The Chamber developed a list of principles which we believe will foster job growth and competitiveness. We use these principles as a guide in reviewing legislative proposals at all levels of government.

- Government rules and regulations should provide for safe and responsive business operations, but should not be onerous, costly, or out of context with competitive locations. These regulations should be appropriate for the level of government enacting them (local, state, or federal). Government must be conscious of the overall cost of doing business — taxes, fees, insurance, regulatory expense — so as to provide a competitive business environment.
- GPCC will work with like-minded organizations to advance an agenda leading to economic growth and prosperity.
- Government at all levels must operate in an efficient way to maximize the services that it provides.
- An educated work force is key to the long-term success of the business community and acts as a catalyst to attract and retain businesses in the region. It is important for us to be active in a significant evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of public education as it applies to producing a quality education for students as well as a job ready work force.
- Our region should strive to provide efficient services with the lowest possible tax rates. Taxes should be broad based and not target a particular industry segment and need to be shared equitably between business and citizens.
- Infrastructure improvements (physical, intellectual and financial) are crucial for the competitive landscape of our region.
- Quality of life issues impact the business environment and serve as a positive factor in talent recruitment. It is crucial that the business community support and grow the arts and culture and tourism sectors which are proven job creators. We must also play a constructive, supportive role with government efforts to address public safety concerns.

*– **Rob Wondering** is President and CEO of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. His column runs the second Wednesday each month.*

Quoted

"We at the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce look forward to working with this new group and the returning Council members on an agenda of economic growth and job creation."
WONDERLING

Contact the Chamber

Helping businesses grow is what the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce is all about. If you have any questions about how we can assist your organization, please visit our website at greaterphilachamber.com or e-mail me at rwonderling@greaterphilachamber.com.

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Russia says US criticism of vote 'unacceptable'

Russia dismissed U.S. criticism of its parliamentary election as unacceptable yesterday and urged its former Cold War enemy to refrain from such "hostile attacks" in future.

Washington said it was seriously concerned by the conduct of Sunday's election, in which Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's ruling United Russia party suffered a decline in support but won a slim majority in the lower house.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who has been seeking to consolidate improvements in the sometimes strained relationship with Russia, suggested earlier yesterday the vote was neither free nor fair.

"Regrettably, Washington sticks to outdated stereotypes and labels without even attempting to understand what is happening in our electorate."
FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT

Thousands of Russians protested in Moscow against the alleged vote-rigging on Monday and demanded an end to Putin's rule. A few hundred stages similar protests yesterday. **REUTERS**

Violence. Afghanistan

▶ Afghans run from an explosion during a religious ceremony in Kabul city center yesterday. At least 30 people were killed.

MASSOUD HOSSAINI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Deadly blasts rip Afghanistan

A suicide attack killed at least 55 people at a gathering of Shi'ite Muslims at a crowded Kabul shrine yesterday in the worst sectarian violence Afghanistan has seen since the fall of the Taliban. The Kabul bomb was the deadliest in the capital since 2008. REUTERS

Romney staff spent $100K to hide records

- Used state funds to buy all new computers in effort to keep records secret
- Move was legal
- Erased internal documents from his tenure as governor

Mitt Romney spent nearly $100,000 in state funds to replace computers in his office at the end of his term as governor of Massachusetts in 2007 as part of an unprecedented effort to keep his records secret, Reuters has learned.

The move during the final weeks of Romney's administration was legal but unusual for a departing governor, Massachusetts officials say.

The effort to purge the records was made a few months before Romney launched an unsuccessful campaign for the Republican presidential nomination in 2008. He is again competing for the party's nomination, this time to challenge Barack Obama for the presidency in 2012.

Five weeks before the first contests in Iowa, Romney has seen his position as front-runner among Republican presidential candidates whittled away in the polls as rival Newt Gingrich, the former speaker of the House of Representatives, has gained ground.

When Romney left the governorship of Massachusetts, 11 of his aides bought the hard drives of their state-issued computers to keep for themselves. Also before he left office, the governor's staff had e-mails and other electronic communications by Romney's administration wiped from state servers, state officials say.

Those actions erased much of the internal documentation of Romney's four-year tenure as governor, which ended in January 2007. Precisely what information was erased is unclear. **REUTERS**

Bad news?

Republican and Democratic opponents of Romney say the scrubbing of e-mails — and a claim by Romney that paper records of his governorship are not subject to public disclosure — hinder efforts to assess his performance as a politician and elected official.

Earthlike planet discovered

MOFFET FIELA, CALIF. The most Earthlike planet ever discovered is circling a star 600 light years away, a key finding in an ongoing quest to learn if life exists beyond Earth, scientists said.

The planet, called Kepler-22b, joins a list of more than 500 planets found to orbit stars beyond our solar system. It is the smallest and the best positioned to have liquid water on its surface — among the ingredients necessary for life on Earth.

This is the first detection of a potentially habitable world orbiting a Sunlike star, scientists reported in findings to be published in The Astrophysical Journal. **REUTERS**

NASA/AMES/JPL-CALTECH

▶ Rendering

GOP blocks judgeship nominee

WASHINGTON. Republicans yesterday blocked President Barack Obama's nominee for a judgeship on a key U.S. appeals court that John Roberts vacated six years ago when he became U.S. chief justice.

On a 54-45 vote, Democrats fell short of the 60 votes needed to end a procedural roadblock against Caitlin Halligan, a former chief appellate lawyer for New York state.

Republicans opposing her cited her record on detainee policy and gun rights, including lawsuits she worked on against gun manufacturers. **REUTERS**

Obama targets GOP in snarky speech

President Barack Obama turned up the heat on his Republican foes yesterday as he portrayed himself as a champion of the middle class and laid out in the starkest terms yet the populist themes of his 2012 re-election bid.

In a speech meant to echo a historic address given by former President Theodore Roosevelt in the same Kansas town more than 100 years ago, Obama pressed his case for economic policies he insists will benefit ordinary Americans struggling through hard times.

He seized the opportunity to step up pressure on congressional Republicans to extend an expiring payroll tax cut that independent economists say is needed to keep the fragile economic recovery from unraveling. **REUTERS**

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myentertainment

2

THE WORD

Metro's **Dorothy Robinson** shares her take on the world of gossip @dorothyatmetro dorothy.robinson@metro.us

The feed ...

▶ **Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.**

Joel McHale has a challenge for his fans, Simon Pegg is getting his movies mixed up, Hank Azaria is getting to the root of his problems and Conan O'Brien is starstruck.

▶ **@joelmchale**
Contest: find the account on twitter w/the fewest # of followers & the largest number of tweets. Prize: DVD of the Chevy Chase's Karate Dog.

▶ **@simonpegg**
Slightly confusing doing press for two films simultaneously. Keep talking about Ethan Hunt's faithful canine sidekick, Snowy.

▶ **@HankAzaria**
I confuse tackle with tickle a lot.

▶ **@ConanOBrien**
Had a great celebrity sighting today: the @DalaiLama at Chipotle.

Azaria

The Shore gets another scent

▶ I know where most men would want to put their nose.

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Not to be outdone by fellow "Jersey Shore" castmembers **Snooki** and **Sammi** releasing their own perfumes, busty reality star **JWoww** is releasing a signature fragrance. The perfume, simply called JWOWW, comes out just in time for the holiday season, retailing at such choice outlets as Kmart, Amazon.com and www.jwowwperfume.com.

According to the press release, JWOWW is a "sexy perfume inspired by days and nights down the shore." A tiny gold JWOWW charm adorns the sleek bottle, which was also designed by the reality TV star.

Classy rebranding from JWoww here. I love that "fresh air" (see below) is included as one of the predominant "notes" in place of, say, "vomit after a night of Red Bull, 2 a.m. chicken wings and a half case of Miller Lite." That's what I imagine for a smell "inspired by nights down the shore."

And incoming hate mail from Jersey people in three, two, one ...

Get a whiff!

Just in case we can fool ourselves into thinking this scent wasn't created by a bunch of Chinese child laborers mixing together a bunch of synthetic compounds into something resembling "sweet," there's even a hilarious rundown of the "notes" in the $29.99 bottle:

▶ **Top notes:** Anjou pear, sparkling citron, fresh air
▶ **Middle notes:** Rose petals, geranium blossom, sheer muguet
▶ **Bottom notes:** Sandalwood, deep musk, white moss

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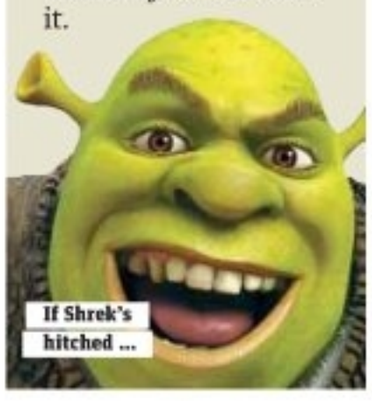
DOROTHY ROBINSON'S WORD BLOG

Jolie-Pitt kids want marriage

It turns out the tabloids aren't the only ones constantly asking why **Brad Pitt** and **Angelina Jolie** haven't gotten married. Their six children are just as curious, Jolie admits in a "Nightline" interview with **Christiane Amanpour.** "They have asked, yeah, because they see movies that have the people getting married in the movies. Shrek and Fiona are married," Jolie says. "We've explained to them that our commitment — we decided to start a family — was the greatest commitment you could possibly have."

Could it be? Are the Jolie-Pitt children are closet Republicans? Certainly sounds like it.

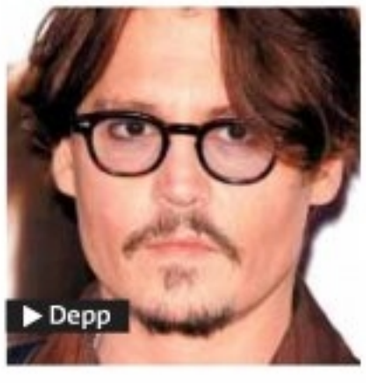


If Shrek's hitched ...

Talking points

Depp to talk to LAPD

The Los Angeles Police Department is interested in speaking with **Johnny Depp** after one of his bodyguards was accused of assaulting a disabled woman at an **Iggy Pop** concert last week, according to TMZ. According to the filed complaint, **Robyn Ecker** — who paid $600 for her tickets to the concert — claims a member of Depp's entourage grabbed her wrists and wrestled her to the ground after she was dancing too close to his VIP table. Ecker went to the hospital before filing the complaint.



▶ Depp

He won't be Papa Clooney

This might have seemed obvious, given his aversion to marriage, but **George Clooney** has made it official that he has no plans to become a father. "I've always known fatherhood wasn't for me," he tells Australia's Daily Telegraph. "Raising kids is a huge commitment and has to be your top priority. For me, that priority is my work. That's why I'll never get married again."

ScarJo still down with marriage

Despite the demise of her two-year marriage to **Ryan Reynolds**, **Scarlett Johansson** doesn't regret saying "I do," she tells Cosmopolitan magazine. "I'm a big believer that when something feels right, you should do it," she says. "Getting married was the right thing to do because it was natural. It grew out of a romance and love and a desire to have a future with somebody." And Johansson is more than willing to take some of the blame: "Relationships are complicated," she adds. "I think I was not fully aware of the peaks and the valleys."

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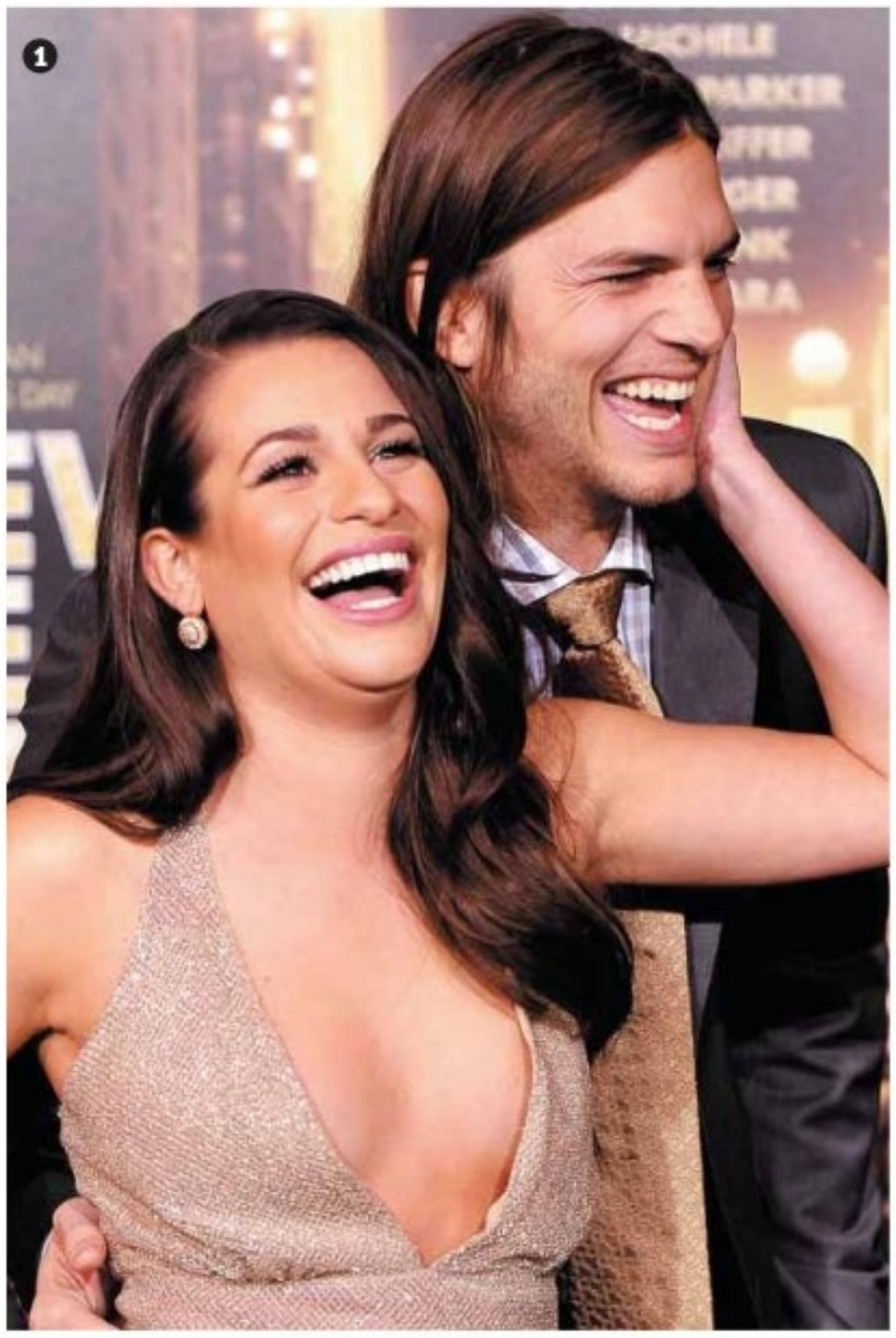
The 'New Year's Eve' premiere and more



1. Demi who? Lea Michele and Ashton Kutcher got flirty on the red carpet at the premiere of "New Year's Eve" in Hollywood, Calif., on Monday. Both actors are part of the film's ensemble cast, which opens this Friday.

2. Stacy Ann Ferguson (better known as Fergie) and husband Josh Duhamel also attended the "New Year's Eve" premiere.

3. Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt attended the premiere of Jolie's directorial debut, "In the Land of Blood and Honey" at the School of Visual Arts in New York City on Monday. The film is set for release on Dec. 23.

4. Katherine Heigl and husband Josh Kelley also popped up at the "New Year's Eve" premiere. Is anyone in Hollywood not in this movie?

5. Musician Jason Aldean and wife Jessica Aldean attended the American Country Awards 2011 in Las Vegas on Monday. The country singer bagged an impressive six awards, including Artist of the Year and Album of the Year.

6. Carrie Underwood was also at the American Country Awards. The "American Idol" alum won three awards, including Female Artist of the Year.

7. "Modern Family" star Jesse Tyler Ferguson and Justin Mikita attended the Trevor Project's 2011 Trevor Live! at The Hollywood Palladium in Los Angeles on Sunday.

1, 2, 4: JOHN SHEARER/GETTY IMAGES
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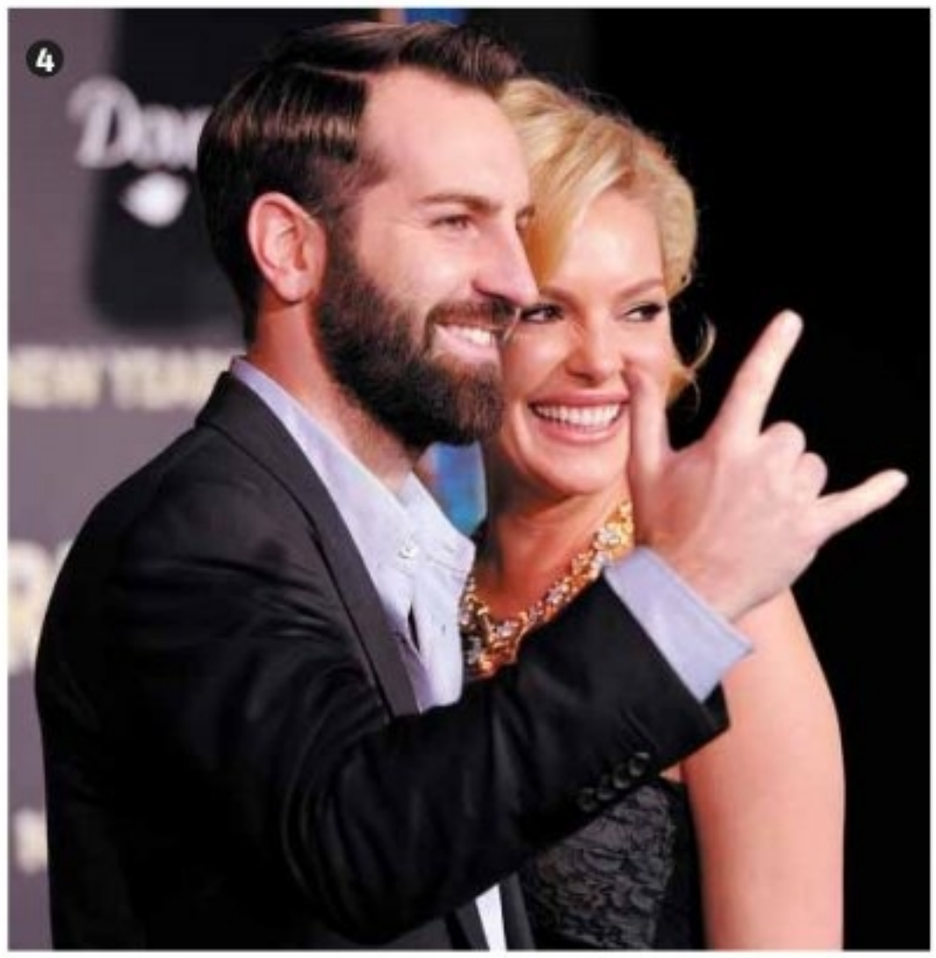

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Stephen Lang vs. T. Rex

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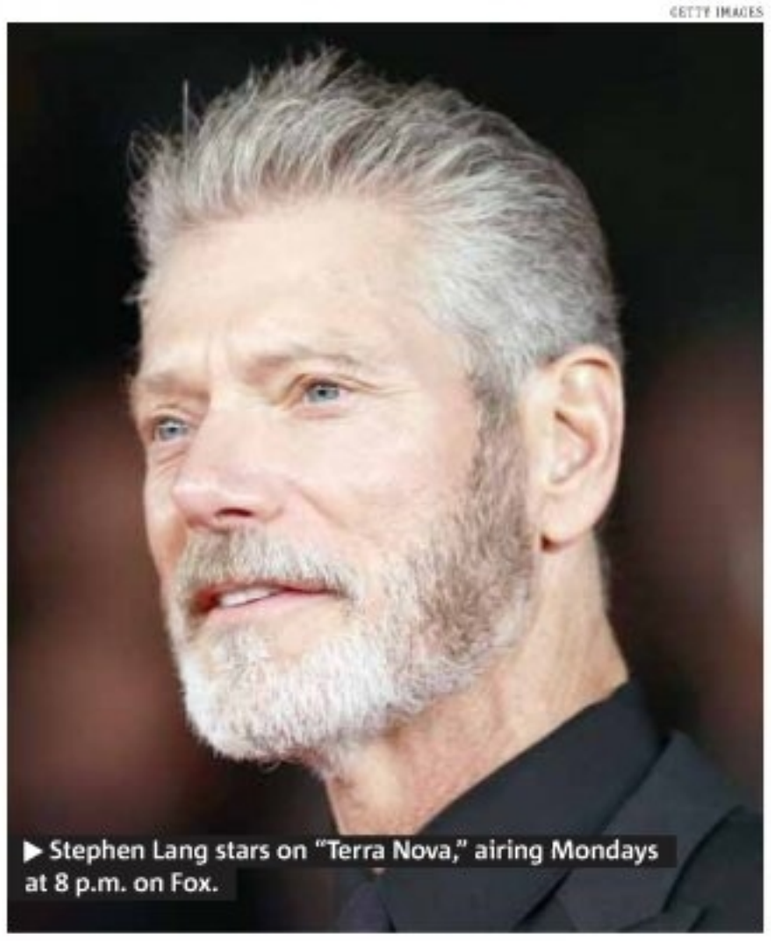

▶ Stephen Lang stars on "Terra Nova," airing Mondays at 8 p.m. on Fox.

▶ We might just put our money on the self-described 'silver fox' ▶ The badass from 'Terra Nova' and 'Avatar' on his time-traveling, prehistoric roles ▶ Why he doesn't mind being typecast at this stage of the game

Actor Stephen Lang is getting attention for his work playing a gruff, militaristic leader shepherding a group of humans through a foreign landscape filled with deadly creatures. No, not "Avatar." While Lang's new gig as Commander Taylor on "Terra Nova" — in which he leads a pilgrimage of humans 85 million years into the past to colonize an alternate earth — might bear some resemblance to the 2009 blockbuster that shot him to fame, he's quick to point out the differences.

Were you reluctant to take this part because of similarities people might draw with "Avatar"?

The "Avatar" thing is very interesting, because the reason you would want me to do the project is because of "Avatar," and the reason you would not want me to do the project is "Avatar." And so, I tend to think that that equation cancels itself out.

What was your impression when you first saw the pilot episode?

I thought that we were on our — how do you put it? It's a maiden voyage. There's a certain caution that goes with it. There's a certain finding your way, as the show finds its own sort of tone. I liked it. You see fully formed characters. It tells a story. I thought the effects worked as well as we wanted them to work. But as in all the work I've ever done, I feel there's room for advancement in it, clearly. And so, you know, it made me proud, but also anxious to do better.

How much does it help with your performance when you're on location?

Just being out in a pristine environment — that's where you're supposed to be. It's one less artificial element to have to create. And I've gotten used to being in Terra Nova. There's an expanse to the place. It sort of fills you up and makes you feel like this is mine.

On a role

Are you at all afraid of typecasting after "Avatar" and then this role?

You know, I'm 59 years old, and if I'm typed right now, I'm typed as a charismatic, macho, silver fox. So, if that's the case, I can live with that. [Laughs]

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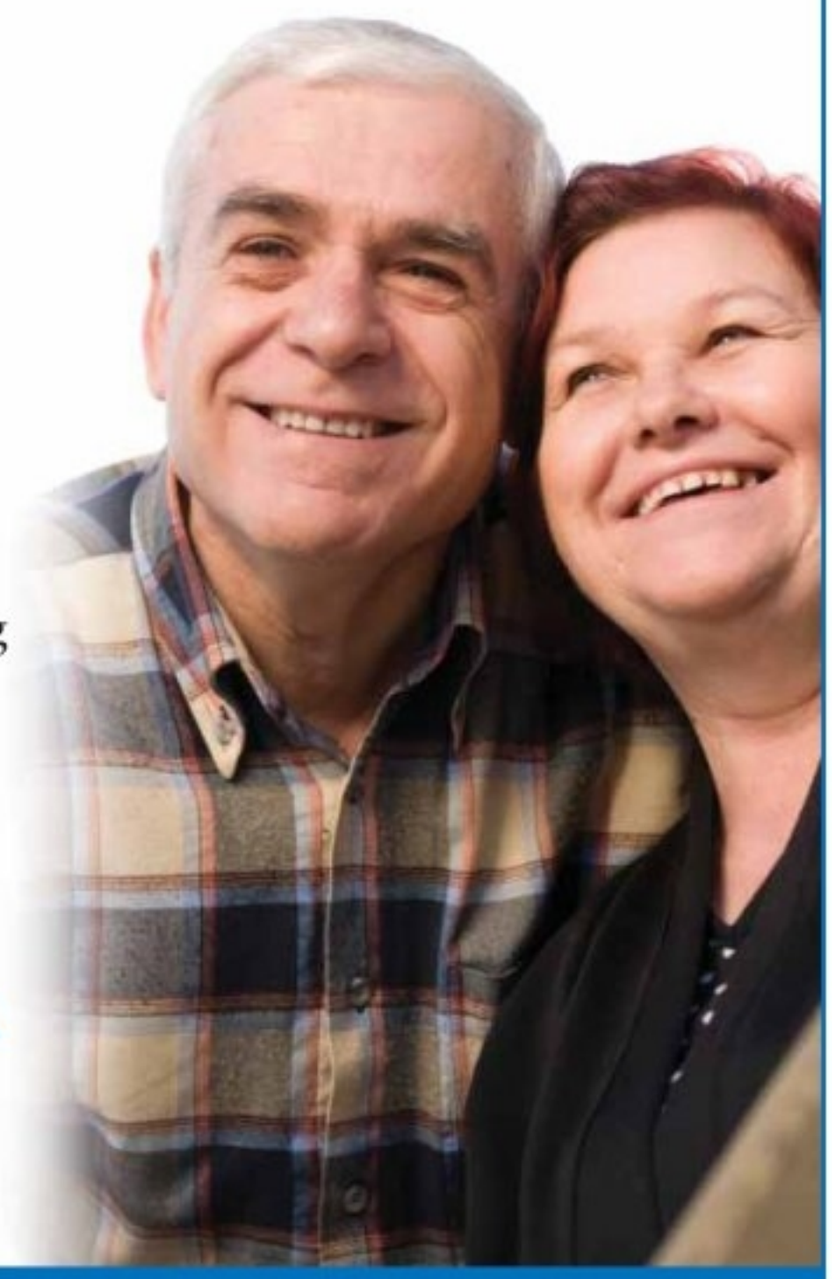

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▶ Home Sweet Homebrew gift set

TV watch list

'Becoming Santa'

FILM. To reclaim the holiday spirit after the death of his father, a man goes to Santa Claus school in this documentary examining the icon and the way we embrace him.
9 p.m., OWN

'Happy Endings'

COMEDY. Cash-strapped Max agrees to play St. Nick for Penny's charity event. Maybe he should take some lessons at Santa Claus school first.
9:31 p.m., ABC

'State of Play'

DRAMA. This epic political thriller starring Bill Nighy, James McAvoy and Kelly Macdonald delves into the mystery of a murdered woman with ties to a member of parliament that unearths a major conspiracy. The six-hour series spawned the 2009 film starring Russell Crowe and Ben Affleck.
Miniseries premiere, 10 p.m., BBC America

COURTESY OF OWN

▶ Jack Sanderson learns "Becoming Santa" isn't just about a holly, jolly disposition.

'Modern Family'

COMEDY. The family realizes the only day they have to celebrate Christmas together is the day they realize they only have one day to celebrate it together. Enter Express Christmas, giving last-minute holiday planning — including tree-buying and gift-wrapping — a new meaning.
9 p.m., ABC
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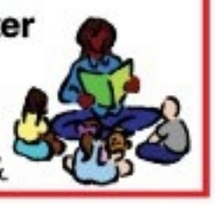

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Fassbender's own 'Shame'

Watching himself have sex onscreen isn't the most comfortable thing in the world, but Hollywood's rising star, Michael Fassbender, is willing to suffer for his art

Michael Fassbender has been talking about sex all day long. He's looking a bit weary as he hunches over, elbows on his knees in the Crosby Street Hotel, trying to explain how he managed to simulate so many torrid scenes for his NC-17 film "Shame" — about a sex addict living in New York City. In between explaining to us what "Fancy a root?" means in Australia (sex) and his ideal choice for an Oscar host (Tina Fey), the 34-year-old German-born Irishman opened up about shooting so much full-frontal nudity. He didn't mind that part, but watching those scenes is another story.

"It was — I'm sure you understand, you just sort of imagine it was you — it's odd. The faces that one pulls in these encounters — I wanted it to be very honest without any filtering or anything," Fassbender says with a slightly embarrassed grin. "So it's kind of full-on seeing yourself. It's kind of like listening to your answering machine back on your phone system. That's bad enough, so imagine yourself naked."

Fassbender is having a particularly sexy year, given that he's also starring in "A Dangerous Method" as psychotherapist Carl Jung, whose methods of treatment for a young woman become, ahem, carnal. We wondered what Jung might've had to say to Fassbender's "Shame" persona, Brandon.

"I think he'd first of all tell him that it's all right," he says. "To be a little bit kinder to himself. I think Brandon doesn't like himself very much and so he sets about abusing himself. So that's what he'd say and then he'd probably say, 'Go see my friend Ziggy Freud.'"

HEIDI PATALANO
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WWW.METRO.US/MOVIES

ABBOT GESSER

▶ Michael Fassbender's Brandon doesn't enjoy most of the sex he's having in "Shame," opening Friday.

Working with Steve McQueen

This is Fassbender's second collaboration with artist-turned-director Steve McQueen, with whom he made "Hunger," about Irish poet and hunger striker Bobby Sands. With the two already set to make another feature together, "Twelve Years, a Slave" co-starring Brad Pitt, Fassbender explained what has made their partnership so unique.

"I don't know. It's just one of those things. It's like chemistry," he says. "It just sort of works. We're both very comfortable being ourselves around each other with all the ugly attributes as well as the good. We're very honest with each other and we demand the best from each other and ourselves. We're trying our best and we trust each other so if we fall, we're going to go down together and hopefully help each other back up again."

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▶ Kaling says she still gets excited when she sees celebrities.

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How to make it in Hollywood without becoming paparazzi bait (and other concerns)

In her new book, "Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me? (and Other Concerns)," Mindy Kaling shares everything from awkward teenage experiences to the meeting that landed her a job as a writer on "The Office." In between, the actress and comedian gives unsolicited advice on "Best Friend Rights and Responsibilities," 12 ways for guys to be great (a peacoat, two pairs of shoes, one non-drugstore cologne) and the way to make it in Hollywood (work hard, go to college).

And though there are tales of discovering herself through academic participation at Dartmouth, readers won't find juicy stories about Kaling's private life.

"In this era, which is a tell-all era of communicating, I think it's important to let some girls know you don't have to be that way," Kaling says, "and you can still be in Hollywood and still express yourself."

While Kaling claims to be someone who "definitely loves attention," she's going to leave the paparazzi and sex-life questions to the superstars.

"There's just so many bigger fish to fry in L.A. in terms of famous people," she says. "I still get excited when I see celebrities, and no paparazzi come up to me or anything like that, and I'm happy because it looks like it would be tiresome."

When she's on home turf in Boston, however, she attracts a little extra attention. "That is really nice to come home to that," she admits.

SAMANTHA SWEENEY
letters@metro.us

Prose pro

As a script writer, Kaling says that her

experience writing for "The Office" is what makes her book seem like an old friend.

"My book is very conversational," she says, "and I think that is completely [due to] my job, because it's to write dialogue, so the way I write is that I'm speaking to the reader."

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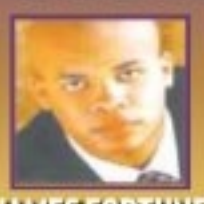
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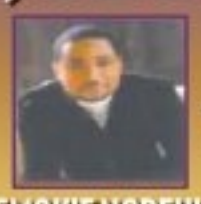
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Getting in with the Mods

It's time for a '60s redux In homage to The Who's re-release of their seminal album 'Quadrophenia,' we've created our very own Mod capsule collection

The '60s may have been romanticized for a culture of free love, LSD-dropping hippies and bands like The Beatles, The Who and The Rolling Stones. But there was also an undercurrent of slick-suited, scooter-riding youths known as the Mods.

The duds

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3. **Grenson Archie shoes, $305,** www.my-wardrobe.com
4. **ASOS slim tie, $11,** www.asos.com
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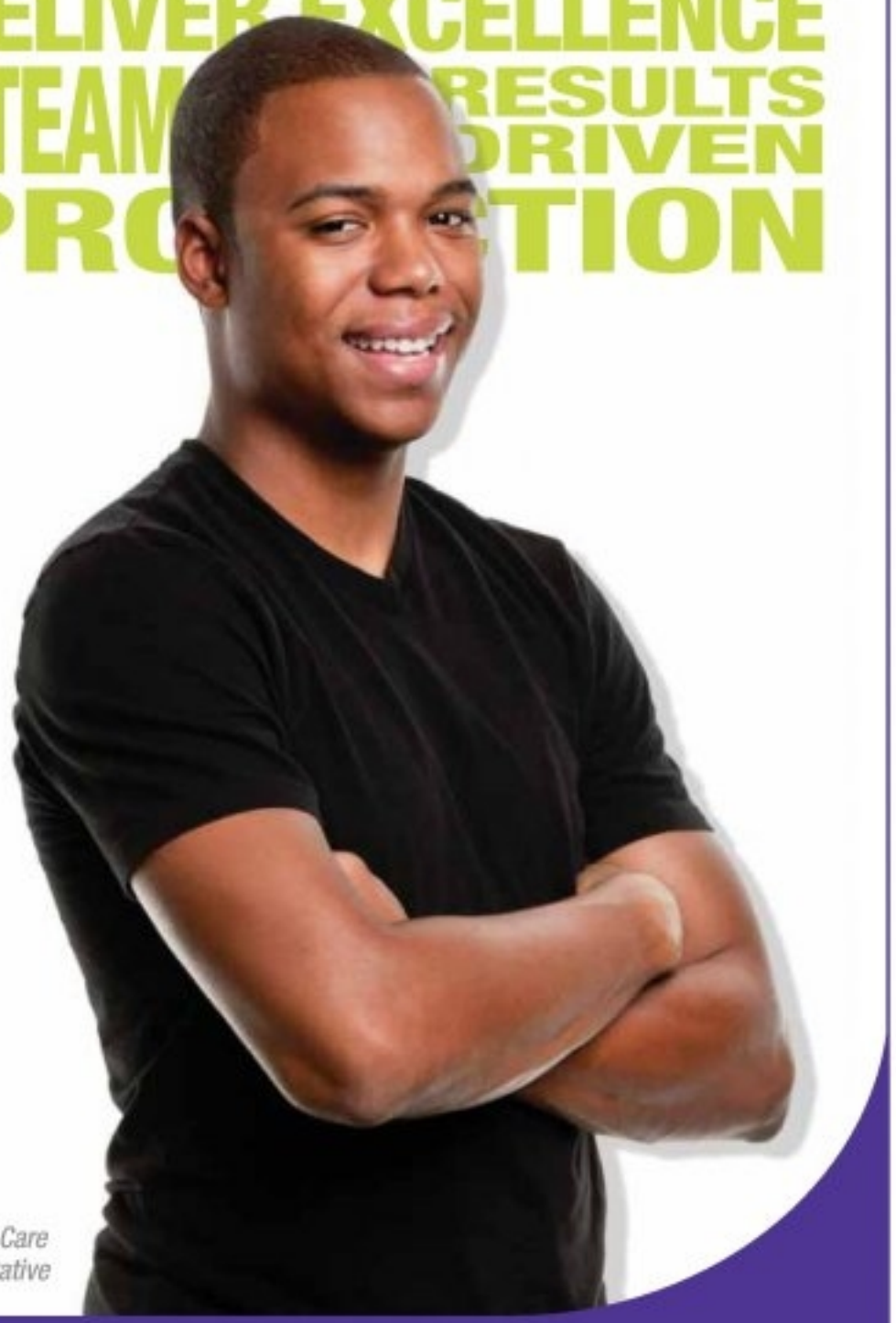
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EU investigates publishers, Apple on e-book price fixing

GETTY IMAGES

▶ The Cybook Odyssey

The European Commission has opened an investigation into whether a group of international publishers — possibly with the help of Apple — has been fixing e-book prices and breaching EU antitrust rules.

The publishers involved include Harper Collins, Simon & Schuster and Penguin.

The Commission will look into the "character and terms" of the agreements between the publishers and retailers for e-book sales. There are indications that these agreements have breached EU antitrust rules that prohibit "cartels and restrictive business practices."

"The Commission will ... investigate whether these publishing groups and Apple have engaged in illegal agreements or practices that would have the object or the effect of restricting competition in the EU or in the EEA," said the European Commission.

The Commission said it had carried out unannounced inspections at the premises of several e-book companies in March. Apparently, the Commission found enough evidence in those visits to proceed with the investigation.

STAN SCHROEDER FOR Mashable
The Social Media Guide

Get your gamer the greatest goodies

Sidescroller picks out a few accessories that will be key for the video game fiend in your life Start by getting them their own 'DJ Roomba'

Gamers can be a difficult lot to buy for. You can't get them a game because they probably camped out at Best Buy to get it the day it came out. Here are a few suggestions.

Sidescroller

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Roomba/ Scooba

$300-$400

Wait. How would a robot vacuum be a good gift for a gamer? The vidiot in your life is probably playing "Skyrim" and that game can suck away hundreds of hours like so much dust. That doesn't leave time for cleaning. Get them a Roomba for vacuuming and its new cousin the Scooba for mopping. Too bad they don't make robots for paying bills or spending time with your family.

▶ Roomba

▶ Scooba

Striiv: Personal Trainer in Your Pocket

$99

Again, it must be noted that gads of people are currently logging hundreds of hours into "Skyrim." That's a whole lot of couch time. Throw them a health-conscious life raft before their veins turns into General Tso's chicken. The Striiv Personal Trainer pocket device gets people exercising through immense gamification. This touch-screen gadget is filled to the brim with varying goals and addictive games. It doesn't lay on the guilt like a family member, but it'll certainly do in a pinch.

iWOW 3D

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Does your loved one tinker on their iPhone or iPad when they should be paying attention to the world around them? You will never convince them of proper social decorum, so you may as well just get them a cool plug-in speaker for iOS devices. This way you can at least follow along as they play "Infinity Blade 2" or watch "outfit of the day" videos on YouTube. Our favorite speaker set is the iWOW 3D by SRS Labs.

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Your brain on music

When you flip through your iTunes collection, isn't it amazing how each song affects your mood so significantly? One can make you feel light and bouncy; another can take you to a dark, depressing place connected to some past memory. Why does this happen?

"Once the emotional link to music is established, our neurological reactions are profound," says Dr. Concetta Tomaino, director of the Institute for Music and Neurologic Function in New York. "Our brain creates hard-wired responses to certain situations that are repeated when listening to the music."

COMSTOCK

▶ Maybe she's got some Katy Perry on her iPod.

Memories are key

The personal connection you have to certain songs triggers the release of feel-good chemicals, like dopamine and serotonin, in the brain. Hormonal changes also occur. "Your brain triggers the release of the 'cuddle' hormone, oxytocin, that promotes feelings of love and trust," says Dr. Michael De Georgia, director of Music and Medicine at University Hospitals Case Medical Center in Cleveland.

Your mom may also come into play. Maegan Morrow, a music therapist who is working with injured congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, believes that our connection with music comes from the way we were nurtured. "A certain voice could make you think of your mother's lullabies," she says.

Makeup matters, too

A song's structure also makes an impact. Dr. Tomaino says anything faster than normal walking tempo makes us feel energized. But according to Dr. De Georgia, the key to an elating song is one whose rhythm is at the same frequency as our heartbeat, an average of 60-80 beats per minute. Anything below 60 beats can be either sad or relaxing, whereas anything above 80 can rev you up or cause anxiety.

"Rock music can make you feel euphoric, but a frequency too much above heartbeat causes your brain to release stress hormones," he explains.

Morrow describes rhythm as an external force to which our bodies align. "Our bodies are rhythmic: our steps, our heartbeat, our breath," she says. "Rhythm brings structure to the environment and the body [tries] to align with that beat."

The happiest tunes

Feelings of happiness are strongly linked to key tone: "Minor keys are often associated with depression and sadness, and major keys with feeling happy," says Dr. De Georgia. Also, higher pitched, generally female sounds are thought to be comforting. But sometimes, it just comes down to you loving the song. "When we know a song's tonal structure, we feel comfortable," says Dr. De Georgia. "Brilliant musicians such as Mozart and The Beatles managed to tweak a song just outside of the 'comfort zone,' making it unique without entirely losing the plot and going offbeat," he adds.

ROMINA McGUINNESS
METRO WORLD NEWS IN LONDON

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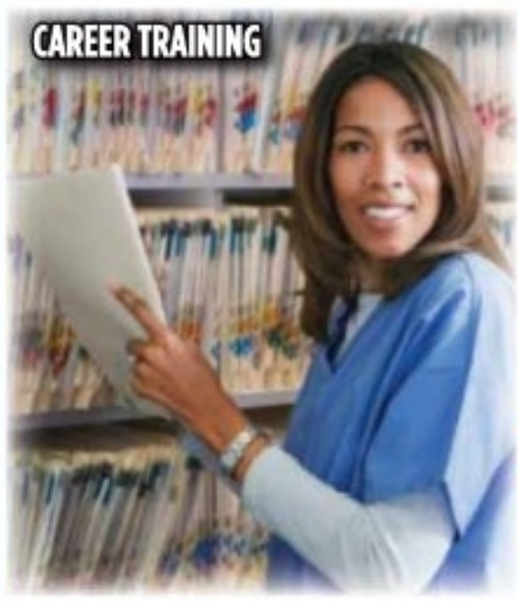

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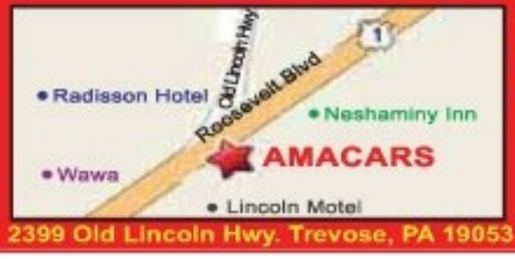

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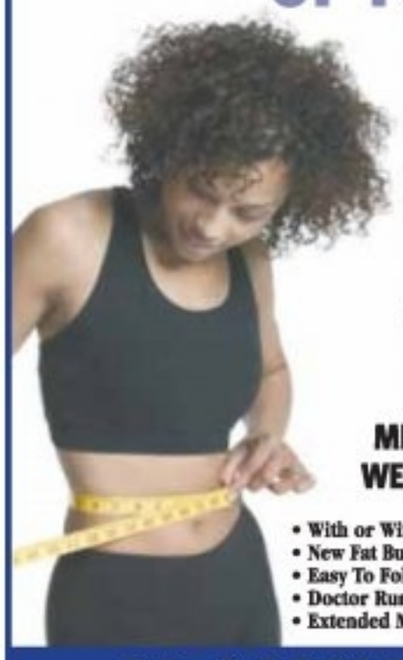

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Let go of 2011, and welcome 2012

DIGITAL VISION

▶ Kiss 2011 goodbye with a good attitude.

Zen in the city

GABRIELLE BERNSTEIN
HTTP://GABBYB.TV/

The only way you'll be able to start the new year fresh is with the right outlook Let Gabby Bernstein guide you through winter soul-searching

The last month of the year offers us the opportunity to shed old ways. Much like the trees must let go of their leaves, we must let go of old patterns to start fresh in the new year. Change can be difficult — but this season, you have the opportunity to make change fun.

Rather than get overwhelmed about what you want to change, make it a ritualistic experience. The same way the leaves change colors before they fall, you too can change your inner life before you make great shifts in 2012. Take time this month to hibernate by spending time in deep contemplation. Get cozy in your local cafe with a cup of hot tea and spend some time reflecting.

Reflect on the year past and plan for the year ahead. Write a list of everything you accomplished in 2011. Then take an inventory of what you'd like to do differently in 2012. Without judgment, reflect honestly and fearlessly on 2011 and make a commitment to yourself that you'll let go of old patterns in order to grow with each new season.

*— Find **Gabrielle Bernstein** on Facebook and Twitter.*

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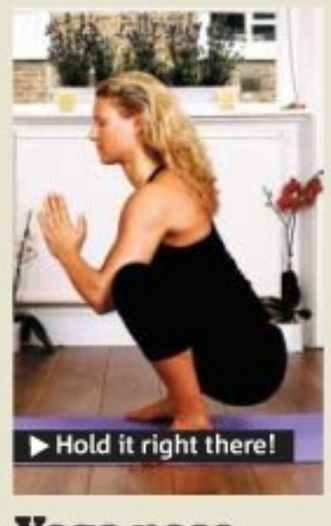
Strike a pose



▶ Hold it right there!

Yoga pose of the week: Garland Pose/ Malasana

Note: People with knee injuries should avoid this pose.

What to do:

1. Squat with your feet as close together as possible.
2. Separate your thighs slightly wider than your torso. Exhaling, lean your torso forward and fit it snugly between your thighs.
3. While you keep your feet flat, keep your body weight on your toes as much as possible.
4. Press your elbows against your inner knees, bringing your palms together, and resist the knees into the elbows.
5. To go further, press your inner thighs against the sides of your torso. Reach your arms forward, then swing them out to the sides and notch your shins into your armpits. Press your fingertips to the floor, or reach around the outside of your ankles and clasp your heels.
6. Hold the position for 30 seconds to one minute, then inhale, straighten the knees and stand.

Benefits:

- Stretches the ankles, groin and back torso
- Tones the belly
- Relaxes the lower back
- Helps constipation

— Pose courtesy of Stephanie Knutsson, Bodyism Yoga instructor

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Letters

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We're all made of same stuff

Wake up, already! W. Bush and Obama are the same corrupt puppets and their policies are 99 percent identical. Stop falling for the "divide and conquer" strategy. All people are the same: We want affordable homes and food, we hate potholes, we want love and respect, we hate the second Star Wars trilogy.

REMICK ENZMINGER, VIA E-MAIL

Unemployed? Here's why ...

RE: "MINIMUM WAGE NOT OUR ENEMY": If not for the minimum wage law, the employer could get away with not having to pay his employees a decent wage. Minimum wage law does not cause unemployment — but outsourcing does, and is a major cause for unemployment. Until corporations cut back on this practice, unemployment will remain high.

GERALD LARKE, VIA E-MAIL

It is not that the minimum wage destroys jobs, but that it prevents extra jobs from being created. The U.S. Government has simply made it too expensive for employers to hire people. The government playing backseat driver to employers is not fair for them — and more so, not fair for the young, poor and unskilled workers who are priced out of the job market because they can not produce the $7.25/hr that would justify hiring them.

HANS HAUGEN, VIA E-MAIL

We need you, not sure why

Occupy Wall Street, what is your mission? I have searched many of the Occupy websites and there are no tabs that I can click on with a clear "about us," "mission" and/or "vision." Get a mission, get a vision, get an agenda and get some space! Because the 99 percent does need you, we just cannot figure out what it is that you are doing for us!

CATHLEEN PRATA CISSE, VIA E-MAIL

Congress bows to a false idol

Many members of Congress have signed a pledge promising never to vote to raise taxes. Why is a separate pledge needed when the oath of office sufficiently covers the members' requisite responsibilities? This "no tax" pledge abrogates due diligence and assiduous deliberation. The nation is burdened with a large segment of Congress who have pledged to say, "No, no, no." We've got a bunch of toddlers in Washington.

GLENN HAYES, VIA E-MAIL

E-mail your letters: **letters@metro.us**

Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words. Metro reserves the right to edit all letters. Please include your name and contact information.

Horoscope

♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** Assume the initiative and direct events yourself instead of waiting on others to lead the way. You're a natural leader with talent many others lack.

♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19.** Others tend to be more responsive than usual, so be sure to make the impression you want — especially when in the presence of someone to whom you're attracted.

♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** Substantial gratification can be derived by working on projects that allow you to make improvements. You'll enjoy revamping outmoded things.

♓ Pisces **Feb. 20-March 20.** Your one-on-one relationships could hold some surprises, such as the unexpected cooperation of someone who never tends to pitch in and be helpful. Enjoy it while it lasts.

♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** One of the best ways to make money is to market what you love doing. It enables you to spend all your working hours applying yourself to satisfying both your inclinations and your income.

♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** There is something exciting about you that attracts others: your happiness at finally being able to spend your time doing exactly what you want to do.

♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** Having a considerate and generous attitude actually puts you in the profit column. Lady Luck tends to favor those who care about the welfare of others as well as their own.

♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** Keeping all of your comments positive enables you to say what you want without fear of anything being resented or misunderstood. It's a good practice.

♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** When you least expect it, you could suddenly get the credit and/or recognition for a kind act or significant accomplishment. In addition to the accolades, a reward could be in the offing.

♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** When you appreciate the fact that you're enough of a go-getter to pursue something quite meaningful, you'll get busy. Assertive action will bring you the results you desire.

♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** Unless you realize the fact that you have the power and fortitude to alter conditions to your liking, you won't do so. It behooves you to have faith.

♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** It's one of those days when it would be best to work in conjunction with others instead of attempting to do everything on your own. An associate could have the talent you lack.

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20 Originate
22 __ fatuus
24 Delinquent(2 wds.)
28 Pseudopod possessor
29 Blame
30 Popped
32 Contented sound
33 Good-hearted ones
35 Vigoda and Burrows
39 Two fives for __ __
40 Hex halved
41 Push with the head
42 Vichyssoise ingredient
43 Seismic uplift
45 Gawk at
46 Black wood
48 Telescope lens
50 Rubber-stamped
53 Muscle builder
54 Chili pepper dip
55 Billy and nanny
57 IRS employee
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60 Type of jacket
65 Showery mo.
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67 Roof overhangs
68 Plow into
69 Vista
70 Dweeb

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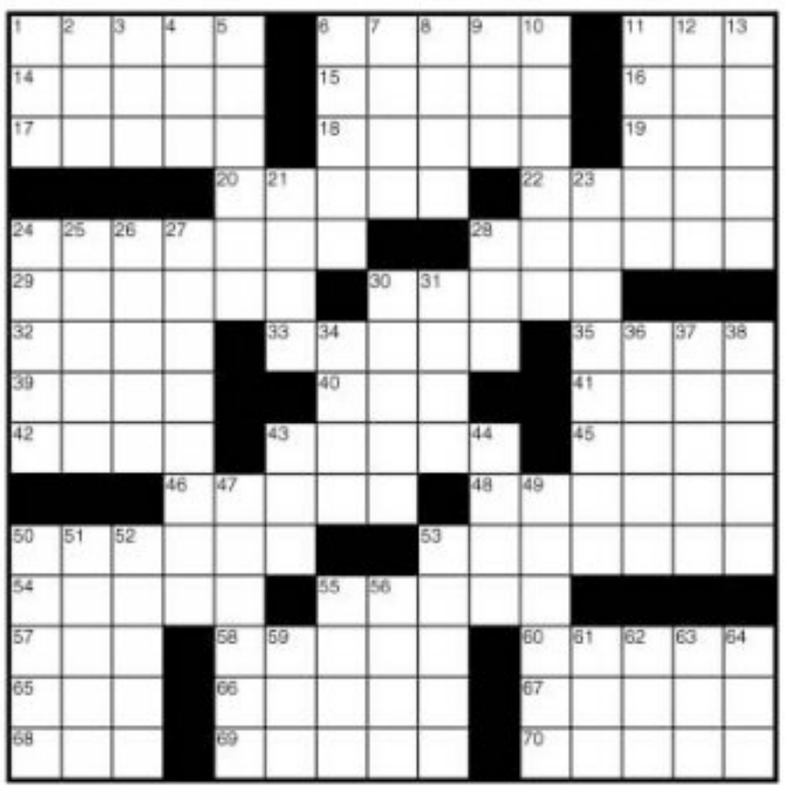

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7 Rainbow goddess
8 Barn topper
9 Riviera summer
10 Blue jeans
11 Astrologer __ Dixon
12 Wing it (hyph.)
13 __ nova
21 Wished undone
23 Socialized(2 wds.)
24 Kind of bull
25 Sharp
26 Landslide debris
27 Jailers
28 "__ Gratia Artis"
30 Manilow or Goldwater
31 "Topaz" author
34 Harrow rival
36 Call, as an elk
37 China's Zhou __
38 Prow opposite
43 Coal scuttle
44 Legal wrong
47 Tigers and bears
49 Mollycoddle
50 Famed statuette
51 Phi Beta __
52 Bedside noise
53 Hesitate
55 Hunter's quarry
56 Comet, to an ancient
59 Ad __ committee
61 Motor City org.
62 Festive night
63 "The," to Wolfgang
64 Parapsychology topic

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SUDOKU **LEVEL: EASY**

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SUDOKU **LEVEL: HARD**

Solution to yesterday's crossword

P	A	S	T	A	■	C	A	V	E	■	T	O	G	O
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■	■	■	T	H	R	U	S	T	■	A	R	R	A	Y
F	E	S	T	O	O	N	■	■	M	R	I	■	■	■
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S	T	A	■	R	E	U	P	S	■	C	L	O	U	D
H	O	M	B	U	R	G	S	■	G	A	L	O	R	E
■	■	■	R	I	O	■	■	M	I	N	U	S	E	S
A	N	I	O	N	■	P	L	A	N	T	S	■	■	■
N	O	B	I	G	D	E	A	L	■	E	I	D	E	R
T	O	I	L	■	A	S	I	A	■	R	O	U	G	E
E	N	D	S	■	B	O	D	Y	■	S	N	O	O	P

How to play Sudoku: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

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How much do the Phils need Jimmy Rollins?

GM Amaro wants to bring shortstop back, but can he? And should he? J-Roll wants five-year deal

JOSEPH KACZMAREK/METRO

Rollins

With the Eagles in meltdown mode, the Phillies are taking center stage once again in our fair city.

The heart of the matter: Should Jimmy Rollins return to South Philly? And, if so, at what cost?

The Phillies reportedly met with Rollins' agent Monday morning with talks ending poorly, but then reconvened later in the evening. Rollins wants a five-year contract, but the Phillies are pushing for three years.

On Monday, GM Ruben Amaro, Jr. said he wanted Rollins back, but was prepared to move on without him. The Phillies are actively pursuing third baseman Aramis Ramirez.

"If Jimmy is not back, we'll have to figure what we'll do around that," Amaro said.

Meanwhile, division rival Miami is loading up for bear. They have already signed Jose Reyes and Heath Bell, and have a 10-year offer on the table for Albert Pujols. They also have a new manager in the fiery Ozzie Guillen. It's only December, but the new-look Marlins are displaying some swagger.

"I think we can win the division right now," Bell told CBSSports.com. "The Phillies, I think we can beat 'em. ... Ryan Howard is hurt. They might not be getting Jimmy Rollins back." METRO

Quoted

"The Phillies ... I think we can beat 'em. They might not be getting Jimmy Rollins back."

MARLINS CLOSER HEATH BELL

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Keep him ...

- **Leader of the pack.** His leadership is the No. 1 thing J-Roll brings to the clubhouse. From his bold "we're the team to beat" prediction to his cool demeanor, there is something to it.
- **The defense rests.** Rollins has three Gold Gloves on his résumé (2007-09) and people still talk about that game-sealing double play snag he made to clinch the 2008 division title.
- **Loyalty has to count for something.** Charlie Manuel loves him and maybe the club deserves to show some loyalty to a guy who claims he took a hometown discount with his original six-year deal.

... or ditch him?

- **No. 1 issue.** He's not a lead-off hitter and refuses to move down the lineup. Rollins swings at the first pitch too much and always seems to be swatting for the fences, rather than trying to get on base.
- **No Charlie Hustle.** Rollins will often casually jog to first base on lazy fly balls or slow ground outs, something he's been benched for multiple times.
- **Can't fight Father Time.** He's 33 years old and hasn't played a full season since winning the MVP in 2007, while watching his average and stolen base totals steadily decline.

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THIS GRETZKY STILL MELTING UP THE ICE

Opinion

JASON McINTYRE
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While I don't necessarily advocate joining Twitter, since it can be terribly addictive and a massive time-suck, the social media site has produced at least one phenomenon that is tangentially related to sports: Paulina Gretzky.

Yes, she's the daughter of the most famous hockey player to ever lace up skates, **Wayne Gretzky**. Paulina emerged on our radar a few years ago as a very good (and attractive) golfer. She's blossomed into a young, 20-something that has gone Hollywood.

With a posse of equally attractive friends, Paulina took Twitter by storm, mainly through droolworthy photographs. As her star rose online, you know what happened next … the photos bordered on provocative, and someone must have notified her dad Wayne, because at Thanksgiving, she abruptly quit.

Then, like an early Christmas present, she returned this week. And yes, the stunning photographs are back. Thank me later.

Quoted

Paulina Gretzky has blossomed into a young, 20-something that has gone Hollywood.

Marry me in San Francisco

Last weekend was a big one for the San Francisco Giants. No, the 2010 World Series champs weren't active in free agency, but two of their players got married.

Barry Zito — the guy best known for surfing, his perpetual state of Zen, a bloated $126 million contract and being left off the Giants' 2010 playoff roster — got married to Miss Missouri 2007, **Amber Seyer**. Giants outfielder **Nate Schierholtz** got married on the same day to **Kate Eveland**, a former San Diego State basketball player.

Hot. Very damn attractive.

Don't act like you haven't had this discussion with friends before: Tennis hot or just hot? (Surely you are familiar with other varieties of this question, such as office hot, gym hot, bartender hot … you get the idea). At any rate, **Maria Kirilenko**, a 24-year-old tennis star who is ranked No. 28 in the WTA, falls into the latter category: Just very, very damn attractive. She was chosen for **Sports Illustrated's swimsuit issue**, and is a fan favorite at all the tennis majors.

Unfortunately, she's officially off the market. Kirilenko recently started dating playboy-hockey star **Alex Ovechkin**.

On their to-do-list: Go on a double date with the tennis-golf tandem of **Caroline Wozniacki** and **Rory McIlroy**.

Sports loser of the week

At the risk of sounding callous, your sports loser of the week is **Brad Penny**. The major league pitcher who has made a cool $49 million over the last 12 years with six teams (career record: 119-99; career ERA: 4.23) and previously dated actresses **Alyssa Milano** and **Eliza Dushku**, was dumped by his fiancee, dancer **Karina Smirnoff**.

There is a chance you're like me and you watch zero reality TV, so you've never heard of Smirnoff. If so, just know that she's a ridiculously hot dancer on "Dancing with the Stars," and you've probably seen her in the pages of a glossy magazine that your wife or girlfriend or mom reads.

*– **Jason Raj McIntyre** covers athletes off the field and runs the popular blog, The Big Lead.*

Metro does not endorse the opinions of the author, or any opinions expressed on its pages. Opposing viewpoints are welcome. Send 300-word submissions to letters@metro.us.

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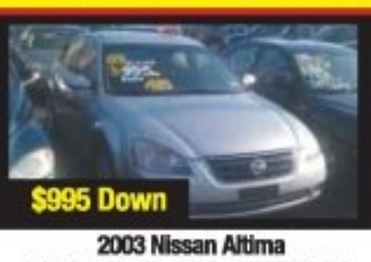
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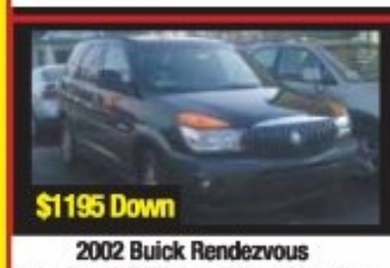
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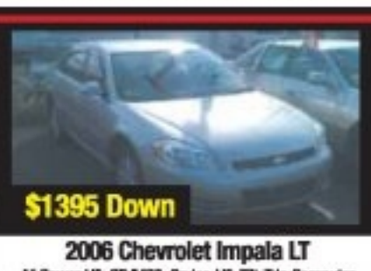
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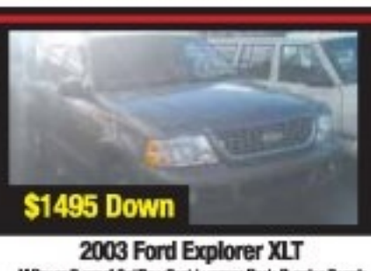
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NFL Power Rankings

Green Bay retains Metro's No. 1 spot • Top six teams all unchanged • Texans, Jets, Broncos climb up • Can Giants stop another free fall?

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Guess who cracked our Top 10?

1 PACKERS (12-0)
Aaron Rodgers played his worst game of the season — by worst, we mean his QB rating was 106.2 — and led the team on a 'Did He Just Do That?-type of game-winning drive. The Packers are scary good, like Bo Jackson's Raiders in Tecmo Bowl-scary good.

2 RAVENS (9-3)
Showed they are at their best when they run it — franchise-record 55 rushing attempts versus Cleveland — and good teams can pound the rock in December.

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3 49ERS (10-2)
The NFC West is theirs for the first time in nine years. Will they rest players down the stretch or go for the NFC's top spot? Look at Jim Harbaugh, you know the answer. Candlestick — or whatever they call it these days — is ready to party.

4 STEELERS (9-3)
Big Ben Roethlisberger called this offense the most explosive he's been a part of — and he's been to three Super Bowls. The Steelers are quietly lurking, as they always seem to do this time of year.

5 SAINTS (9-3)
The Saints might be playing better football right now than they did during their 2009 Super Bowl run. With all apologies to San Francisco, we're salivating at a potential New Orleans vs. Green Bay (Rodgers vs. Brees) shootout in the NFC championship.

6 PATRIOTS (9-3)
If Bill Belichick is telling the truth about not dummying down his playbook in the fourth quarter — the Pats almost blew a 31-3 lead — then maybe there is some cause for concern. Ahh, probably not. Winning.

7 TEXANS (9-3)
Andre Johnson got hurt, so what? The Texans have some kind of weird mojo going and simply can't be denied. We're still not sure how far third-stringer TJ Yates can take them, but we're not counting them out.

8 FALCONS (7-5)
Coach Mike Smith is mad as hell and not going to take it any more. Falcons haven't lived up to hype, but still in better shape than other wild-card contenders Detroit and Chicago.

9 JETS (7-5)
We jumped them up pretty high after beating a dead horse like Washington, but this is classic Jets under Rex Ryan. Border on pretender to contender status, sneak into the playoffs, make a run. It'll happen again.

10 BRONCOS (7-5)
We're not sure what is going out in the Rocky Mountains. In fact, no one is. A group of Harvard students recently conducted a study to find out, calling it "A Statistical Analysis of the Miracles of Tim Tebow." No, really. That happened.

11 LIONS (7-5)
Maybe if they had some discipline — cue, Arnold — they could have made a game out of it last week in New Orleans. Instead, questions abound about a young head coach losing his team late in the season. Still, too much talent to ignore.

12 COWBOYS (7-5)
Yes, Jason Garrett iced his own kicker. But that's not why Jerry's kids lost. They simply played down to their competition, which seems to be a theme in a surprisingly bad NFC East.

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Johnson

13 BENGALS (7-5)
They got blown out by superior Steelers, but 'Cats can still claw 10 wins with three of their final four at their Jungle habitat. Mark that Jan. 1 game versus Ravens down as must-see TV.

14 GIANTS (6-6)
Big Blue showed a lot of heart against best team in football and some have them channeling that 2008 magic that catapulted them to Super Bowl title. We're not going that far but Eli Manning has owned Dallas and their weak secondary.

15 TITANS (7-5)
Chris Johnson (343 yards past two weeks) is proving holdouts help out your conditioning, looking so fresh and so clean as the games start to matter — and that's a bad thing for AFC contenders.

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Sixers announce season schedule, cut ticket fees

After nearly a week of build-up, it's finally here. The Sixers announced their 2011-12 schedule last night. Can you feel the excitement?

As expected, the team will start on a five-game road trip, beginning Dec. 26 in Portland. From there, they travel to Phoenix, Utah, Golden State and New Orleans. The Sixers' home opener is slated for Jan. 6 against Detroit. Noteworthy home games include Feb. 3 versus Miami Heat, Feb. 6 versus Los Angeles Lakers, Feb. 17 versus the defending champion Dallas Mavericks and Feb. 29 versus Oklahoma City Thunder.

Prior to yesterday's announcement, the team's new ownership group released a statement calling for a massive reduction of online ticketing fees. For the 2011-12 season, there is only one comprehensive online ticketing fee of 14.25 percent of the face value, with a $4 minimum charge. Last season, the ticketing fee was never less than $6.50. The Sixers have also eliminated the order and delivery fees.

"On the first day of new ownership, the Philadelphia 76ers reduced ticket prices on nearly 9,000 seats for every Sixers home game," CEO Adam Aron said. "Today, in response to fan comments, we are also announcing a massive reduction in online ticketing fees as well. With these two pricing moves, we have made it much more affordable for Philadelphia sports fans to enjoy Sixers home games in person." METRO

Fast start

Here is the frantic way the Sixers will start the 2011-12 NBA season:

- Sixers at Portland, Dec. 26, 10 p.m.
- **Sixers at Phoenix, Dec. 28, 9 p.m.**
- Sixers at Utah, Dec. 30, 9 p.m.
- **Sixers at Golden State Dec. 31, 9 p.m.**
- Sixers at New Orleans Jan. 4, 8 p.m.
- **Detroit at Sixers Jan. 6, 7 p.m.**
- Toronto at Sixers Jan. 7, 8 p.m.
- **Indiana at Sixers Jan. 9, 7 p.m.**
- Sacramento at Sixers Jan. 10, 7 p.m.
- **Sixers at New York Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m.**

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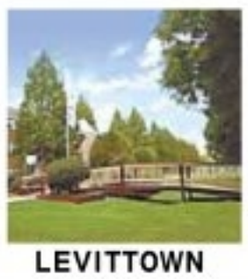

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Hostess with the mostess

This year the gang is coming over to your place — but don't stress We ask the pros for tips on how to throw a party that people will be talking about way after the Christmas lights come down

Expect rave reviews this year.

STOCKBYTE

Barbara Barry

Designer, Barbara Barry Baker Collection

Keep it simple

I try to create spaces that are really calm as a simple backdrop for the stuff of life, and when is there more stuff than at Christmas? Last year I did nothing — I didn't even put up a tree. I couldn't believe how colorful and full my house became of gifts, people, food, things — just the celebration, and it wasn't overwhelming. So I might sound a bit Zen there, but I would [suggest] a simple mantelpiece — I love magnolia leaves because they're still out at this time of year, I love small votives, and maybe a smell in the house like cinnamon.

VICTORIA PEARSON

Barbara Barry

Katie Lee

The chef, cookbook author and Clos du Bois spokesperson will host her family at her new house in the Hamptons for Christmas.

On her style

My entertaining style is similar to my food and fashion style: I like casual, comfortable and a touch of couture. I think when you're entertaining it's about making it easy and making everyone feel comfortable when they walk in your door, not like feeling like the etiquette police are gonna come out. You want everybody to just feel relaxed and have a good time. I think the hostess sets the tone, so if you're having a good time and you're relaxed, everybody else will be too.

Creative centerpieces

It doesn't have to be flowers. One thing I really like to do is get clear glass bowls and fill them with ball ornaments. I'll fill bowls with those and put [them] going down the table. It looks fun and festive and a box of those at the dollar store is, like, two bucks. Get creative: Go out in your yard and get branches, pine cones — you can take a gold glitter pen and decorate each of the pine cones a little bit. I also love citrus for decorating, so if you do the pine branches, put some clementines in there and then everybody can eat those while they're having tea. I also love the way pomegranates look in a bowl.

Ornaments make for a festive centerpiece.

FOTOLINE

On shortcuts you can take

Don't bite off more than you can chew when you're entertaining. Have some assembly foods: Go to the Italian specialty store and buy salami, prosciutto, parmesan and olives and put it on a beautiful platter — that's totally easy. Buy some store-bought breadsticks, wrap them in prosciutto and put that in a glass. For dessert, buy a pound cake, cut it into layers and spread it with whipped cream and berries. There's all kinds of shortcuts you can take, and then you can focus on the main course. And I try to [cook] foods as far in advance as possible and put the finishing touches on right before the merriment.

On desserts

I love cookies because they're easy for people to grab. You don't need a plate and a fork so it's one less thing to wash. I also will fill bowls with candy and let people dig in — it feels a little bit like being a kid.

MELISSA HOM

Katie Lee

Q&A

What should every host have on hand for effortless entertaining?

Amanda Hallay: Booze! As a hostess who has thrown hundreds of soirees, I can attest to the fact that most people are more interested in their drink than anything else, and there is nothing worse than going to a party where there's a shortage of alcohol. When stocking up, make sure you have a bottle of scotch and a big, big bottle of vodka (with accompanying soda, tonic and orange juice) so that when you run out of your fancier cocktails, your guests won't panic. The orange juice will also work for designated drivers and nondrinkers. When serving nonalcoholic drinks, I always make them look as festive as a cocktail; I mix OJ with 7-Up and serve it in a cocktail glass with a maraschino cherry and a paper umbrella so that nondrinkers feel special, too.

Deborah Needleman

Founding editor of Domino magazine, editor-in-chief of WSJ. Magazine and author of "The Perfectly Imperfect Home"

MELANIE ACEVEDO

▶ Needleman

I always feel that if someone comes over to my house and immediately takes a nap, you are a huge success — rather than you're so boring they've fallen asleep. It's the idea that you know that everything is comfortable and the couch is cozy and the pillows are soft and the food is so good. And they're so drunk that they just passed out.

I'm also a big fan of the drinks tray, which looks gracious and grown up. Lined up bottles and glasses just look really pretty set on a tray. When people don't have much room, I've seen them put bottles into the shelf of a bookshelf. It looks very inviting. When people come over, there's not that awkward moment at the beginning — it's like: "There's the bar." They can make themselves a drink. Hey, they can make other people a drink.

Make your pad cozy.

Q&A

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Stewart

Martha Stewart

What's your best piece of entertaining advice for the holidays?
Organization is it.
What about when dinner is served?
Well, you still have to be organized. And stay calm!

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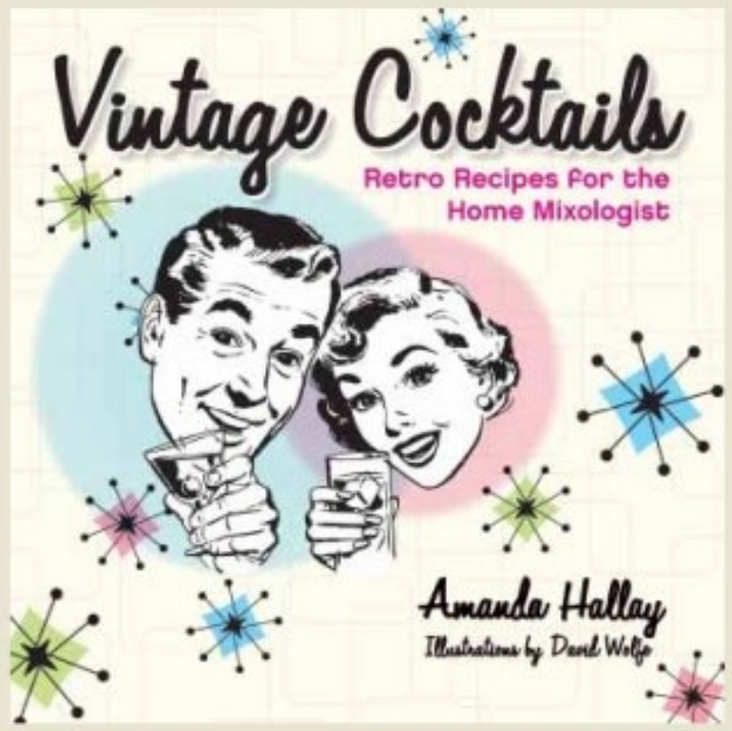
MORE TIPS FROM THESE EXPERTS

Amanda Hallay

Author of "Vintage Cocktails" and professor at LIM College

Which of your vintage drinks are best for a holiday party?
Without a doubt, The Champagne Cocktail! It's so easy to make, but so pretty and festive, and you can save a lot of bucks by not making it with real champagne; you can make it with prosecco, or any sparkling dry white wine. All you do is throw a sugar cube into the bottom of a champagne flute (although any glass will do; who cares when you're serving Champagne Cocktails?!), add a few drops of Angostura bitters (which you buy from the grocery store) a shot of cognac (optional), top with champagne and garnish with a maraschino cherry and a ribbon of orange rind. It is so spectacular looking, but you can bring it in for a dollar a glass, and everyone will swoon when handed such a beautiful cocktail. (And if you're using cheap prosecco, make sure you still announce it as a Champagne Cocktail; nobody will know the difference.)



▶ Hallay

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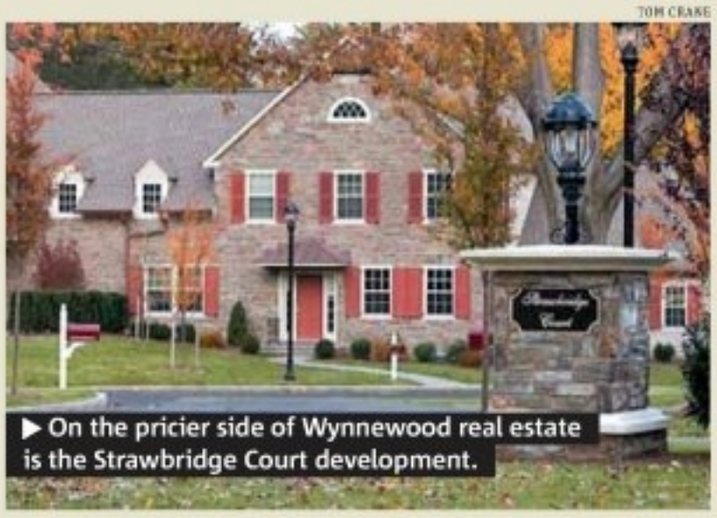
Neighborhood guide: Wynnewood

TOM CRANE



▶ On the pricier side of Wynnewood real estate is the Strawbridge Court development.

By the numbers

Set about 20 minutes west of Center City, Wynnewood starts at City Line Avenue, the city/suburbs dividing line.

Condos along City Line go for $70,000 and up, while the bigger homes farther into Wynnewood run anywhere from $250,000 to $750,000 — with a handful of mansions priced well over $1 million.

Kids welcome

Convenience to West Philly's universities and hospitals attracts professors and doctors to Wynnewood, says Oser. The area is also heavy on families.

▶ Hup's busiest night at the burger joint is Friday, when parents bring their kids in after a baseball or soccer game. "I've never done an exact count," he says, "but judging by the noise, there are definitely a lot of kids in here."

JESSICA WADE

▶ Elevation Burger caters to Wynnewood's health-conscious families — and, of course, teens who like fries.

The family-friendly suburb offers both affordable condos and all-out mansions

Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie makes his home in Wynnewood, but those without a few million to spare can find something in the Main Line suburb, too.

"It's an interesting zip code because it goes all the way out to Gladwyne, so there's a real mix," says David Oser, of RE/MAX Executive Realty, who's been selling homes in the area for more than 20 years.

Part of the reason for that mix is that Penn Wynne, the section closest to the city, used to be a separate neighborhood but is now considered part of Wynnewood, Oser explains. Homes there tend to be smaller and cheaper, with a few streets of twins instead of the single-family homes that make up the bulk of Wynnewood.

▶ Shop at Wynnewood

FEDERAL REALTY

"It's an interesting zip code because it goes all the way out to Gladwyne, so there's a real mix."
DAVID OSER

The whole area is primarily residential, except for the Wynnewood Shopping Center.

"Wynnewood is a great community and, in terms of numbers, there's great density," says Michael Hup, who opened Elevation Burger in the shopping center two and a half years ago. The health-conscious chain serves up organic, free-range beef and fries cooked in olive oil.

"There's no guilt or 'hamburger hangover,'" Hup promises. "People in this community appreciate it — they care about what they eat. They're a little bit ahead of the curve on that."

RACHEL VIGODA
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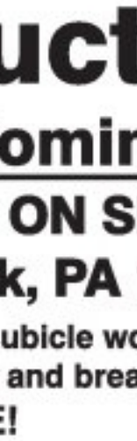

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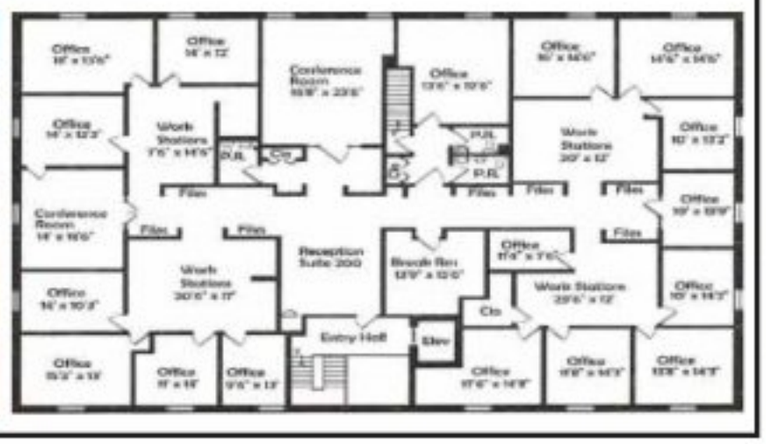

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